

March 3, 2021

The Honorable Jason Doucette
Connecticut House of Representatives
Legislative Office Building, Room 4000
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

RE: Testimony in Support of Proposed Bill 6321, An Act Concerning the Adoption and Implementation of the Connecticut Parentage Act

Dear Representative Doucette:

I am writing to you today in unequivocal support of Proposed Bill 6321, An Act Concerning the Adoption and Implementation of the Connecticut Parentage Act. I urge the committee to take appropriate steps this legislative session to ensure that all families are protected under state law.

The Connecticut Parentage Act (CPA) ensures all children have equal access to the security of a legal parent-child relationship, regardless of their parents' marital status, gender, or sexual orientation, or the circumstances of their birth. This is of utmost importance to my wife Megan and I, as we are looking to grow our family. When Megan and I married in 2017, we knew that we wanted to have children with myself carrying the child. Under the existing legislation, if I were to have a child through a sperm donor, I would be the only legal parent of our baby. Megan would have to adopt our child in order to become a legal guardian as well.

Needless to say, this is a frightening notion. We would have to assume a financial hardship to hire an attorney and complete a second-parent adoption. This is a lengthy, costly process that would require Megan to undergo background checks and an invasive home study. This is unnecessary scrutiny that heterosexual couples do not need to experience. The purpose of a home study for adoptions is to evaluate a family's home for the health and safety of a prospective child. It is redundant and unquitable to expect Megan to endure this process after supporting me through pregnancy, welcoming our child into the world, and co-parenting together.

This is a stark contrast from the experience of our heterosexual friends who are becoming first-time parents. Heterosexual couples return home from the hospital and adjust to life as new parents: Altering sleep schedules, recovering from labor, and bonding with their newborn. In addition to these tasks, Megan and I will be taking steps to expedite her becoming a legal parent in order to fully protect our child. Until this process is completed, Megan would not be able to pick up our child from daycare, bring our child to the doctor's office, add our child to her health insurance, or be recognized as their parent, especially if we travel. Furthermore, if anything were to happen to me, Megan would not be acknowledged as a legal parent and our child would become a ward of the state. Our heterosexual neighbors do not need to be validated as parents in order to be legal guardians. This makes us feel as though we are second-class citizens.

Connecticut has been a leader in protecting families and children, including children raised by same-sex couples. But as it stands now, Connecticut law has not evolved along with Connecticut families. Existing legislation does not protect the children of same-sex parents. Of all the rights fought for by the LGBTQ+ community, this is one of the most significant and upsetting because it extends past an individual or couple. It's children who suffer from this lack of protection. There are many stressors and uncertainties of becoming a new parent. But the legality of our parentage should not be one of them.

Megan and I look forward to continuing the pursuit of parenthood together. However, if we are fortunate enough to become pregnant, I realize that when I give birth, we will not be afforded the presumption of a family unit that is extended to heterosexual couples. Our future child deserves to enter the world with two legal parents. With that being said, the current legal barriers and procedures in place forces Megan to take a backseat.

When Megan and I took our vows, we made a commitment to love and support one another. And when we eventually grow our family, we fully intend to extend that commitment to our child. However, we cannot uphold that promise when there are legal barriers in place that would prevent Megan from being present or playing an active role under various circumstances. It is in the best interest of children to break down the systematic deterrents in place that make it challenging for same-sex couples to establish parentage in the state. We urge you to demonstrate your support of the CPA to ensure parentage law extends protection to all families in Connecticut. Thank you for your consideration, and we hope to gain your support of Proposed Bill 6321 the Connecticut Parentage Act.

Sincerely,

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